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1. Rex Murphy: Relax. Trudeau is busily solving our most urgent energy crisis: Gender

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Rex Murphy: Relax. Trudeau is busily solving our most urgent energy crisis: Gender

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Body

For those still seeking some quantum of solace after the devastating Trans Mountain court decision, turn your hungry eyes to Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi. In anticipation of another G7 meeting to be held this month in Halifax on the always resonant themes of "*Climate* Change, Oceans and Clean Energy," it is reassuring to hear from Minister Sohi that his government has not, as all may have feared, forgotten either gender analytics or gender equity in this turbulent time.

From the minister: "Canada is leading by example to address the issue of gender equality in the G7 energy agenda. We will continue to engage key private sector and public sector leaders on this important issue and take actions to improve gender equality, particularly in the energy sector. We want to influence current and future leaders of Canadian industry to commit to meaningful action in the area of gender equality."

Surely that's a pillow to rest on in these fractious times for the oil and gas industry. Amid all the distractions about pipelines - getting Canada's oil and gas to world markets, breaking the land lock around Alberta's No. 1 industry - it's more than encouraging to know that the really more pressing, more fundamental issues of the oil patch are not being sidelined.

Taking note that "Canada's energy industry is gender-imbalanced" (than which there can be no darker stain on a nation's social justice conscience) Natural Resources Canada issued a statement that Canada's prime minister, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, "has made gender equality a priority for Canada's G7 Presidency." It will be dedicating one of its five main themes to Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the energy industry.

Following such assurances it is surely no surprise that they are lighting bonfires of celebration and relief in Fort McMurray as I type.

As the true poet-laureate of this country, the late and genuinely lamented Leonard Cohen so insightfully observed, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." Knowing that at present female representation in the energy industry is at an abysmal 24 per cent, there was a nugget of comfort in the news of the 8,000 jobs lost to the Trans Mountain court decision. At least most of the laid off, 76 per cent in all, were men!

In these days of progressive and enlightened government, under the aegis of a male-feminist prime minister this must be - I hesitate to call it good news - welcome as a signal of retributive social justice.

It was also worth noting that the prime minister divined other gleams of light that escaped the less-focused gaze of his Trans Mountain critics. They, the critics, saw the decision to freeze construction and start another round of assessments as putting the whole pipeline project in jeopardy, as yelling to the world that Canada was not a place Rex Murphy: Relax. Trudeau is busily solving our most urgent energy crisis: Gender

for investment in energy, and as a possibly fatal hit on the already deeply wounded economy of Alberta. Not Mr. Trudeau. Reaching into his capacious wardrobe for his best Panglossian chapeau, Mr. Trudeau had this to say: "When you look at the heart of the decision, the court actually gives a path forward."

John Ivison: With cabinet shuffle in the offing, Trudeau again set to play gender card(https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/john-ivison-with-cabinet-shuffle-in-the-offing-trudeau-again-set-to-play-gender-card)

John Ivison: Senate amendments to gender diversity bill set to test Trudeau's feminist principles(https://nationalpost.com/opinion/john-ivison-senate-amendments-to-gender-diversity-bill-set-to-test-trudeaus-feminist-principles)

Absolutely. When you are down to just one pipeline. When Energy East has been abandoned. When the British Columbia government is still in full opposition. When the federal leader of the NDP is running for election in ground zero for pipeline opposition and leading the charge against Trans Mountain. When Greenpeace and Environmental Defence and the Suzuki Foundation are laying court challenges for the benefit of killer whales. When the process of assessment has already taken six or seven years: In that context, when a Federal Court of Appeal issues a verdict stopping the project in its tracks, impugns the review process, tumbles the international markets, and (effectively) issues a call to "Save the Orcas," well, if that is not a "path forward," then pray tell me, why do we have paths, and what does forward even mean?

Reverting now to a less sunny view of things, hailing a "gender equity in the energy industry" summit at this time, and in this moment, is risible and delusionary. If a summit is called for, it should be on whether, after this court decision and seven years of assessments and consultations, there is even an energy industry to seek equity in. And to describe the decision as offering a "path forward" is tactless to the point of insult.

There are two words never to be used when "further assessments" are called for. Short and quick. Environmental assessments are a form of bureaucratic and activist quicksand. Enter them at peril. Note too, that if - if - government manages to repair the endless process (dubious) and win the next appeal, all the other apparatus of opposition to oil and gas remains on call. If there is any sign of progress in one court, there will be cases in others, protests on the ground and, as always, the relentless opposition to the very idea of any oil and gas industry surviving in the era of <u>climate</u> change <u>doom</u>-mongering. !@COPYRIGHT=© 2018 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

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